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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION ON CAFTA, AUGUST 10, 2005

1. Op-ed by Pablo Rodas-Martini in San Pedro Sula-based liberal daily "Tiempo" on 8/10, entitled "Rebel Countries against CAFTA-DR." "There has been a lot of commotion these days about the split decision made by the House of Representatives on CAFTA-DR, approved by hardly a two-vote difference. The split decision will remain in history, but the important thing is that the treaty has been approved."

"As long as the U.S Congress was still discussing ratification of CAFTA-DR, the Dominican Republic, Nicaraguan, and Costa Rican Congresses had the luxury of putting CAFTA-DR on the 'to do list.' But as soon it was approved in Washington, D.C., they began running out of time."

"For these 'rebel' countries there are no guarantees that the Caribbean Basin Initiative (CBI) will remain if they don't ratify CAFTA. They would then only have a Generalized Preference System, which is much weaker and more complicated than the CBI."

"Time is running out for these 'rebel countries.' Apart from the U.S. ratification, CAFTA-DR revitalizes the negotiations the countries have with Colombia, Peru, Ecuador, and Panama. The rebel countries opposing CAFTA-DR have to face the inconvenience that three other countries have already approved the treaty, and also that there are four others that are going forward while they have fallen behind."

Tuebner